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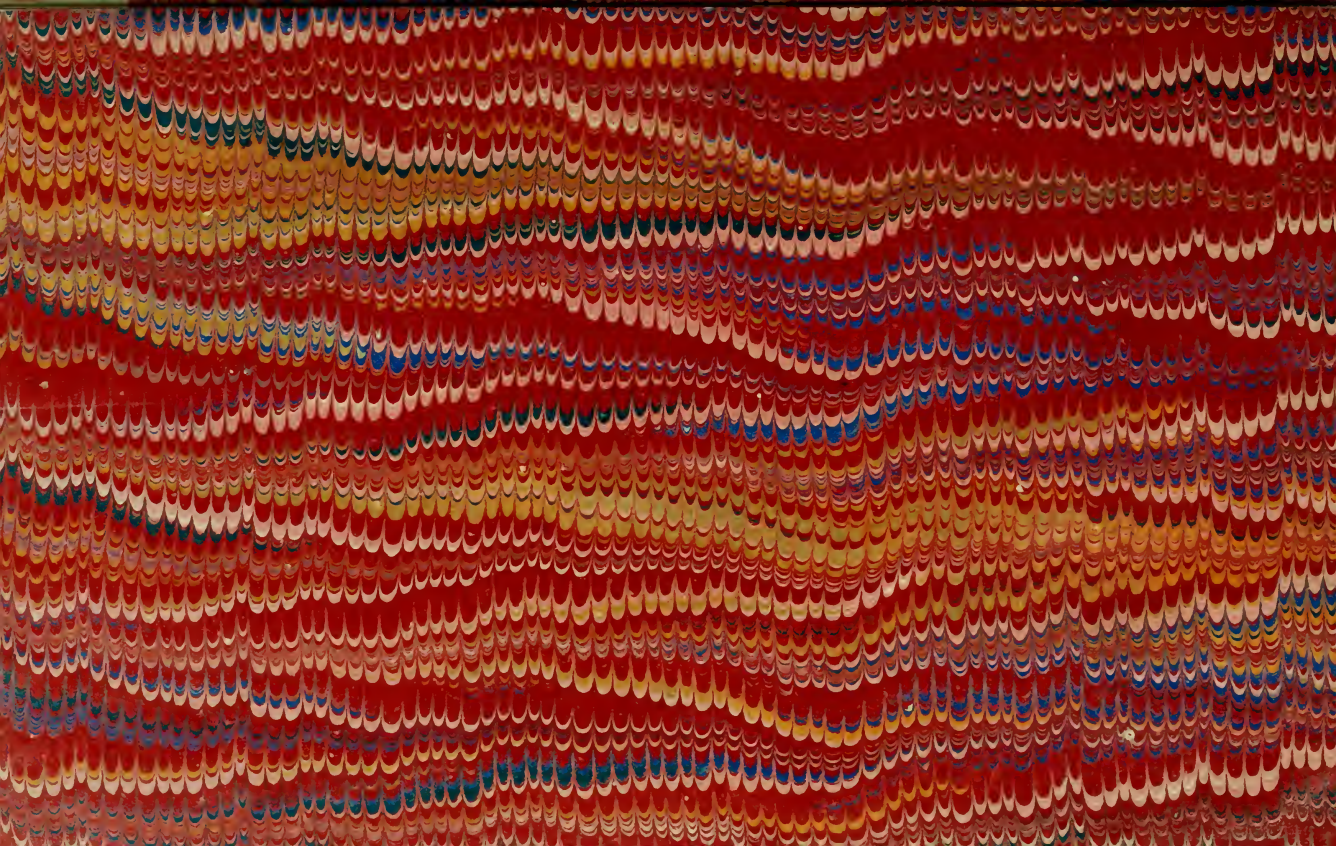

1776. 1876.

# Centennial Anniversary

OF

# American Independence:

AT

## SING SING, N. Y. JULY 4th, 1876.

CONTAINING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTENNIAL FOURTH OF JULY COMMITTEE OF SING SING—PRAYER BY REV. A. D. GILLETTE—ORATION BY HON. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW—HISTORICAL SKETCH BY REV. ALEX. WATSON.

Compiled by C. B. Palmer, Sec. of the Committee.

SCARBOROUGH:
PRINTED BY THE SUNNY SIDE PRINTING CO.
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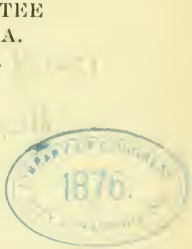


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# Proceedings.

A meeting of several citizens of Sing Sing, among others Rev. Dr. A. D. Gillette, Townsend Young, C. B. Palmer, Z. C. Inslee, Stephen Ayles, D. E. Provost, was held on the evening of May 19th, 1876, at Odd Fellows' Hall, (which had been donated gratuitously for the use of the meeting) for the purpose of instituting preliminary measures for the proper observance of the Centennial Fourth of July at Sing Sing.

Rev. Dr. Gillette was selected as Chairman and C. B. Palmer appointed Secretary.

Owing to the few persons present the meeting was adjourned for one week.

On the evening of May 25th, a larger number being present, a Committee of five was appointed, consisting of James Williamson, Isaac B. Noxon, Thomas Leary, A. B. Reynolds, Zebulon C. Inslee, to solicit subscriptions for the defrayment of expenses.

The Secretary was directed to open a correspondence with the Hon. John T. Hoffman, and others, for the selection of an orator of the day.

At a subsequent meeting held June 1st, the Secretary reported the following letter having been received from Ex-Gov. Hoffman:

ALBANY, May 30th, 1876.

GENTLEMEN:

I feel deeply the honor done me by so many of my old friends and neighbors in inviting me to deliver the Centennial 4th of July Oration at Sing Sing. I would accept with great pleasure, if I could do so with justice to myself or to them; but all through next month my engagements are so numerous that I cannot give the time necessary for due preparation.

Believe me when I say that I give this answer with great regret.

Very truly yours,

JOHN T. HOFFMAN.

To Townsend Young, Chairman, &c.

It was thereupon on motion adopted that the Hon. Chauncey M. Depew be invited to deliver the Oration, and James William-

son, Isaac B. Noxon and J. Holly Platt were appointed a Committee to wait upon Mr. Depew.

The following gentlemen were appointed a General Committee to carry out the wishes of the meeting, and subsequently sub-committees were arranged as follows:

## Committees.

Chairman.
Townsend Young.
Secretary.
C. B. Palmer.
Treasurer.
Isaac B. Noxon.

Arrangements and Decorations.

C. C. Childs, Jr., Richard Taylor,
C. B. Palmer, Daniel D. Mangam,
John E. Cooley, G. Ten Eyck Sheldon,
Z. C. Inslee, J. H. Dunscomb.

Speaker and Reception.

James Williamson, J. Holly Platt,
Isaac B. Noxon, Dr. B. Brandreth.

Fireworks.

C. C. Childs, Jr., Isaac B. Noxon,
Andrew Finegan.

Music.

Robt. M. Lawrence, Daniel D. Mangam.

Refreshments.

Stephen Ayles, Richard Taylor.

Printing.

William C. Howe, A. B. Reynolds,
Andrew Finegan.

Finance.

James Williamson, Z. C. Inslee,
A. B. Reynolds, Thomas Leary,
Isaac B. Noxon.

The citizens' meeting was thereupon adjourned sine die.

The General Committee was immediately called to order, and Townsend Young elected Chairman, C. B. Palmer Secretary, and Isaac B. Noxon Treasurer of said Committee,

At the meeting held June 8th, the Committee to whom was referred the subject of orator, reported having secured the services of Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, and further, the Rev. Alexander Watson had consented to prepare an Historical Sketch of the Village of Sing Sing, and that the Rev. Walter Scott would read the Declaration of Independence.

The Committee of Arrangements reported that they had invited Maj. W. W. Benjamin to act as Marshal of the Day and that he had accepted the same. The Committee further reported that they had secured Mt. Pleasant Academy grounds for the exercises of the occasion, and the pyrotechnic display would be had on the grounds of St. John's School, Eastern avenue. An invitation was directed to be sent to the Military and Fire Companies, and all Civic Organizations of the village.

An invitation was directed to be sent to James B. Weeks, V. Thompson, D. E. Provost and H. King, choir masters of the various churches, that themselves and choristers participate in singing on the Fourth.

At the meeting held June 12th, the Finance Committee reported nearly seven hundred dollars subscribed, whereupon appropriations were made to the various sub-committees.

At the meeting held June 29th, 1876, communication from Geo. W. Cartwright, President of the village, on behalf of himself and the Board of Trustees, was received, accepting invitation of Committee to participate in procession.

At this meeting, on motion of Townsend Young, Esq., Chairman, it was adopted that Dr. B. Brandreth be invited to act as Chairman of the meeting on the 4th of July.

The Committee directed to wait upon Dr. Brandreth, reported that Dr. Brandreth fully appreciated the honor tendered him, but was forced to decline.

At the same meeting, Messrs. G. T. E. Sheldon and C. B. Palmer, to whom had been referred the matter of Programme, reported the following as having been adopted:

## Celebration of American Independence.

### At Sing Sing, N. Y. July 4th, 1876.

The One Hundreth Anniversary of American Independence will be ushered in by the ringing of the Church bells at mid-

night. At sunrise a National Salute will be fired and the Church bells will be rung; and there will be firing of cannon and ringing of bells at 12 o'clock noon, and at sunset. It is requested that the American Flag be displayed over all public buildings and private residences, and such other ornamentation as may be deemed appropriate, particularly along the route of the procession.

## The Procession

Will be formed at 9 o'clock, A. M. on Spring Street, the right resting on Waller Avenue. The order of procession will be as follows:

Detachment of the 16th Battalion, N. G. S. N. Y.,
Col. Alfred Cooley, Commanding.
Orator, Historian, Reader of the Day, Clergymen,
and Centennial Committee.
President and Trustees of the Village,
Thirty-eight Young Ladies in carriages—
Emblematic of the several States.
Civic Organizations.
Invited Guests in carriages.
Fire Department.
Citizens in carriages.

## The Line of March.

The line of march will be as follows, viz:—From Waller Avenue through Spring St. to Main St., down Main St. to State St., through State St. to William St., up William St. to Highland Avenue, through Highland Avenue to Ellis Place, up Ellis Place to Churchill St., through Churchill St. to Eastern Avenue, through Eastern Avenue to Prospect Place, through Prospect Place to Elizabeth St., through Elizabeth St. to Tompkins Avenue, through Tompkins Avenue to Clinton Avenue, through Clinton Avenue to Linden Avenue, through Linden Avenue to Croton Avenue, down Croton Avenue to Highland Avenue, through Highland Avenue to North Malcolm St., through North Malcolm St. to Broadway, up Broadway to Mill St., up Mill St. to Main St., down Main St. to Spring St., and the Grounds of Mt. Pleasant Military Academy.

## Order of Exercises.

DOXOLOGY, . . . . . Old Hundred.
PRAYER, . . . . . Rev. A. D. Gillette, D. D.
ANTHEM—"Let Every Heart Rejoice and Sing."
READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,
Rev. Walter Scott.

SOLO AND CHORUS—"Star Spangled Banner."
ORATION, . . . . . Hon. Chauncey M. Depew.
SOLO AND CHORUS,—"Land of Freedom."
HISTORICAL SKETCH, . . . . . Rev. Alex. Watson.
CHORUS—"America—My Country 'Tis of Thee."
BENEDICTION, . . . . . Rev. Delos Lull.

## Fire Works.

There will be a grand display of Fire Works in the evening, commencing at 8 o'clock, on the Grounds of the St. John's School, (the Rev. Dr. Gibson's,) Eastern Avenue, which will conclude the public observances of the day.

By Order of the Committee of Arrangements.

MAJ. W. W. BENJAMIN,
Marshal.

MAJ. W. A. DOWNS,
LIEUT. J. S. VAN CORTLANDT, } Aids.

## Events of the Day.

At midnight of July 3d, the ringing of the various church bells, the firing of cannon and various bands of music marching through the streets, startled the sleeping inhabitants of Sing Sing, and announced, with a will, at least, to that particular portion of the Republic, that it had entered upon the second century of its existence. Early, crowds began to gather upon the streets, and the process of decoration upon many residences throughout the village was brought to completion. The Marshall, assisted by his aids, Maj. W. A. Downs and Lieut. J. S. Van Cortlandt, were early on the ground, engaged in arranging the various organizations taking part in the procession. The Committee having in charge the arrangement congregated at the M. E. Church, on Spring street. A few minutes past the announced time, the right of procession turned into Main street, preceded by the 16th Battalion Band, under the leadership of Joseph Quick, Esq. Everywhere along the line of march decorations were noticeable. Among many others was the residence of Jacob B. Clapp, Spring street; on William street, Messrs. Tuttle, Dunscomb, and Pierson; on Highland avenue, Mr. C. T. Draper and S. M. McCord suspended a very fine American flag; the residence of C. B. Palmer and that of Mr. W. A. Bowron, adjoining were tastefully decorated with bunting and flags; Mr. Wm. Grant's residence, corner Maurice avenue, presented a very fine appearance, decorated with bunting, and a large flag on the cupola; Mr. D. D. Mangam had arranged a profusion of flags and lanterns upon the piazza and through the trees; at the resi-

of Mr. H. J. Baker, the large Corinthian columns, being wound with red, white and blue bunting, presented an attractive appearance; all along the line of Ellis Place, elaborate decorations appeared, among other houses those of Henry C. Nelson, Dr. G. J. Fisher, A. L. Young, S. F. Washburn, and Mr. Abram Hyatt; conspicuous for elaborate decoration was the residence of Wm. G. Hull, on the corner of Tompkins and Linden avennes; on Croton avenue, the residences of J. Johnson, J. Holly Platt, Postmaster Williamson, Wm. E Ryder, E. G. Blakslee, and Mr. Thomas Leary were conspicuous among many others; on North Malcolm street extensive decorations appeared; a large arch appropriately decorated had been constructed across the street near the residence of Patrick Rigney; the residences of Capt. S. Raymond and several others displayed the colors; on Broadway, E. M. Collyer's residence attracted particular attention; on Mill street, Mr. A. Finegan had appropriately decorated the large columns in front of his residence; at the corner of Mill street, the American Hotel and Masonic Hall, including the Register office, displayed American flags; the excuse of the respective proprietors that the decorations were not more elaborate, was that all decoration material in the village was exhausted; all along the line of Main street a grand sight was presented; Messrs Kromer & Kuhn presented an elaborate decoration, also C. M. Raymond, J. S. Wood, and others; Palmer Hall was tastefully arrayed in a set of flags of all nations, surmounted by a large American flag; the stores of Messrs. P. J. Keenan, Herman King, J. Brakely, Wm. H. Dean, Ira Sarles, J. C. Mead, Washburn & Sons, and many others, each vied in presenting the finest appearance; Barlow Block, on south side, including the Republican office, displayed an American flag from each window.

The procession having arrived at the grounds of the Mt. Pleasant Academy, (politely tendered to the committee by Messrs. Benjamin & Allen,) where a commodious stage, beautifully decorated, had been erected, the literary exercises, as announced in the programme, took place. Upon the stage, during the exercises, were the Hon. N. Holmes Odell, M. C., D. P. Bacon, Esq., and several other prominent individuals.

In the evening a large concourse of people gathered upon St. John's School parade ground, where the fire works had been placed. Among the larger pieces was "Goddess of Liberty," "Maltese Cross," "American Flag," "1776—July 4—1876." This ended the observances of the day, and one of the, if not the finest ever participated in in Sing Sing, with not a single accident to mar its pleasures.

# Prayer.

## By Reverend A. D. GILLETTE, D. D.

Almighty and ever blessed God; the Father of our Lord Jesus, in whose name we come, confessing our manifold transgressions; praying for pardon and justification, with all needed temporal and eternal blessings.

The heavens declare thy glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; we give thee most hearty and unfeigned thanks, for our creation, and for all the blessings of this present life; and above all for the inestimable gift of thy Son, to be our Teacher, Exemplar and glorious Redeemer.

We adore thee for the way in which thou hast led us as a people; for having kept this great land from occupancy by despotic rulers, and ignorant subjects, until thou hadst put upon its shores, under thy shadowing wing, those who knew thy name and reverenced thy laws, knowing their social and political rights, living, legislating and worshipping in ways which neither kings nor prelates dared to dictate or hinder. We thank thee for our history—the hundred years past this day, and for what thou didst enable the founders of our government to resolve and do, and for the way in which thou didst guide their councils, direct their legislation, giving them wisdom, and in war an earnest desire that conflict should end in victory and peace, and plenty for all.

We devoutly praise thee for moving upon their hearts to plant churches in all their settlements, and bring them

ultimately into christian brotherhood, love, freedom and equality before God and the laws of the land.

We bless thee for our institutions of humanity, our excellent schools, and the ability of those who control and instruct them. We bless thee that slavery is abolished; and pray that the work of moral freedom may progress until the slavery of sin shall be ended, and our sons and our daughters shall enjoy the freedom wherewith Christ makes free all who believe on his holy name.

Be thou pleased, in the future, so to bless our common country, in all its departments, that we may become, indeed, that happy people, whose God is the Lord. Bless, we beseech thee, the President of these United States, our Congress, our Governors, Legislatures and all in authority. May our votes ever be given for men good and true to occupy positions of usefulness and honor. Bless the people of our county, our town, and our village with dispositions to be wise, virtuous, temperate, moral and religious. Give intelligence and ability to those who are about to address us, and may we so observe this Centennial Anniversary that all shall redound to the good of America and the world.

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

# Oration.

## By Hon. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.

We stand to-day in the presence of the most important hundred years in history. In everything which adds to the comfort and happiness of man; in achievements which ennoble and adorn our common human nature; in discoveries which alleviate suffering, annihilate space, and increase the sources of wealth and prosperity; in the extension of Christian and philanthropic efforts; in scientific research, in activity of thought, in freedom of discussion, and in the spread and growth of liberty, this century has no equal. It has given us the steamship, the railroad, the telegraph. It has bridged oceans, wedded seas, and belted the globe with lightning. It has brought all nations in close contact, and under the influence of a common and enlightened public opinion. It has over-turned the despotisms of ages, established widely representative government, and a recognition of the rights of the individual man. It has enfranchised the slave, and given to humanity and the world the American Republic.

In the early days it was accounted that he would be a fortunate and happy man who should see a Century of Independence. Amidst the hostile predictions of its enemies and the doubts of its friends, occasioned by the utter prostration of business and credit, and the disagreements and distrust which followed for awhile the Revolutinary War, a conviction grew that if the nation, with its institutions intact, its liberties secure, its territories unimpaired, passed the magic period of one hundred years, its prosperity and greatness were assured for endless genera-

tions. While in the localities, all over the land, made sacred by the blood of patriots and their deeds, the people are assembling to celebrate their several Centennials, and the grand panorama with its pictured story, beginning with Concord and Lexington and Bunker Hill, majestically unfolds, with what emotions do we entertain the crowding memories of those heroic days.

As Antæus in his battle renewed his strength whenever he touched his mother earth, so shall the Republic live as long as its children recall, to follow and imitate, the examples of their revolutionary sires.

This day rounds and completes the first century of the Republic, and we behold, and are the citizens, of a nation, broader in territorial expanse, richer in material wealth, stronger in every element of empire, exerting a wider and more beneficent influence, and possessing a grander freedom than was ever dreamed of by its founders. No survivor of the revolution remains to us. We cannot gather, as did the preceding generation, about the knees of the aged veteran "while he shoulders his crutch and shows how fields were won." The wonderful events which have intervened, our material progress, the great civil war, with its sorrows and sacrifices so fresh in our memories, have relegated to a dim and distant past the stirring incidents of 1776. I conceive no duty more urgent, no task more grateful, than to gather and present, whatever there may be of history which sanctifies and enriches the immediate spot whereon we stand. For any review of the years, from 1774 to 1783, from Concord to Yorktown, would be sadly incomplete which did not give a conspicuous position to our old County of Westchester.

For ten long years, the colonists struggled, petitioned, remonstrated with the mother country for their rights. They asked for no new privileges, no unusual power, but simply to be left undisturbed in the enjoyment of rights guaranteed by their charters, and secured to every subject of Great Britain by the successive victories of a thous-

and years over the arbitrary pretensions of the crown. But a ministry goaded by greed and financial embarrassments, became the instruments of tyranny to oppress, and of Providence to consolidate and enfranchise, the American people. We had every material and natural facility for manufactures and yet were prohibited from making any article of wear, any implement of agriculture, any weapon of the chase or war, or of buying them from any source but Great Britain. With large surplus productions from our industries, and every element of prosperous commerce, we were forbidden to trade except with the mother country; we were taxed without a voice as to its imposition or expenditure; we were commanded to quarter and maintain troops sent to keep us in subjection; we were to have no longer a voice in the appointment or control of our legislators, judges, county or town officers; and the sacred right of the trial by jury was to be violated by the transportation of our citizens beyond the sea for trial. While Adams and Hancock, in Massachusetts; Jefferson and Henry in Virginia, and other colonial statesmen were eloquently protesting against these tyrannies, and educating the people to die freemen rather than live slaves, Westchester in her town meetings and county conventions, was passing resolutions of encouragement and defiance; and her Jays and Van Cortlandts and Morrises in the State Provincial Congress, and out of it, were doing more than all others to keep New York true to the common cause. On the 10th day of August, 1774, the freeholders and inhabitants of the town of Rye met, and appointed John Thomas, Jr., Robert Bloomer, Zeno Carpenter and Ebenezer Haviland, a committee to confer with the other towns in the county, and the assembly spoke as follows: "This meeting, greatly alarmed at the late proceedings of the British Parliament in order to raise revenue in America, and considering their late most cruel, unjust, and unwarrantable act of blocking up the port of Boston, having a direct tendency to deprive a free people of their

most valuable rights and privileges, an introduction to subjugate the inhabitants of the English Colonies, and render them vassals to the British House of Commons," Resolved, 1st. That "they would bear true allegiance to the King, but only under enjoyment of the same constitutional rights and privileges as the people of England." 2nd. That "no man should be taxed except by his own consent or that of his representative in Parliament." 3rd. That it was the "opinion of the meeting that the Act of Parliament shutting up the Port of Boston was a most rigorous and unjust piece of cruelty and despotism." 4th. They advised unanimity and firmness in the colonies; and 5th. They called for a General Congress, and agreed to abide by its decision.

Similar resolutions declaring "that the Acts of the British Parliament are arbitary and oppressive, and should meet the abhorrence and detestation of all good men," were passed by the other towns, and in due time the County Convention met at White Plains and acted in the spirit of these resolutions. Such was the attitude of this county, and such its public acts on the great question at issue, one hundred and two years ago, and a year before the battle of Concord. On the 10th day of May, 1775, another great war meeting was held at White Plains, and after the retirement of the Mob element, sent there to make trouble, they unanimously resolved "to send Deputies to meet the Deputies from the other counties, for the purpose of electing delegates to represent the Colony of New York in the General Congress of all the Colonies at Philadelphia," and in the list of those delegates occur the well-known county names of Col. Lewis Morris, Stephen Ward, Daniel Drake, Col. James Holmes, John Thomas, Jr., Jonathan Platt, Robert Graham, and Phillip Van Cortlandt. Among the resolutions of that County Convention, was one of thanks to the patriotic minority of the General Assembly of the Province, who strove to commit that body, then controlled by the English and aristocratic

influences, to a support of the Sons of Liberty, who were compelling the tea ships to sail out of the harbor of New York without unloading their cargo, and forcing the Royal Governor to return his stamps to the English Government; and the leaders in that brave and gallant minority, were John Thomas, Jr. and Pierre Van Cortlandt, the representatives from this county.

In June, 1776, the Provincial Congress, sitting in New York, alarmed by the near approach of the British, adjourned to White Plains. They came in no palace cars, or comfortable coaches. Combining in their office the civilian and the soldier, and wielding the pen or the sword, as the exigency demanded, they moved on horseback with Pierre Van Cortlandt, their President, at their head; and as often upon the journey as the express of the Commander-in-Chief overtook them, calling for immediate action upon some urgent matter of supplying men, arms or material of war, they wheeled their horses together, convened their body, passed the requisite legislation, and moved on, their discussions distinguished by none of the garrulous and endless gabble of the modern legislature. On the 9th of July, 1776, the Provincial Congress then in session at the Court-house in White Plains, received the Declaration of Independence from the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. Accompanying it was a letter from John Hancock burning with fervid patriotism and hopeful prophecy. In front of the Court-house, in the presence of the Congress and the assembled people, the immortal document was read, and then and there they pledged their fortunes and their lives that the late Colony and now Sovereign State of New York should join with and stand by the other Colonies in sustaining it to the end. Early in 1776 the whole power of the British navy, army and Hessian mercenaries, was concentrated for the capture of the City of New York, and Washington marched to its defence with all the Continental forces.

After the disastrous battle of Long Island, and the de-

feat upon Harlem Heights, the American troops retreated into Westchester, and from thence till the close of the struggle—for six long and terrible years—it was the theatre in which were enacted all the horrors of war. Hostile forces marched and counter-marched across its fields. The terrific onset of open combat, the ambuscade, the midnight surprise, reddened with blood every hamlet and cross-road. The Hessian, the cow-boy, and the skinner, pillaged and outraged at will, and the track of the marauder was marked by the flames of burning houses, and the wailings of helpless women and children. The inhabitants of neutral ground could keep no stock, for it was stolen; could have no furniture, for it was taken from them or wantonly destroyed; could raise no crops, for they were carried to the camp; could cut no grass, for it was foraged; and frequently without regard to age or sex, they were stripped of necessary clothing in the depths of hard winters. But I cannot find that any proposition for surrender was ever entertained, or prayer for submissive peace ever uttered; steadly they furnished their quotas to the patriot army, and sullenly, defiantly, yet hopefully, battled for liberty and peace. It was the aim of the British to make New York City their centre of operations, and great depot of supplies, to control the North River, and make a junction with their forces in Canada, and cut off the Eastern from the Southern and Western States. For this purpose it was necessary to capture and hold the Hudson highlands and West Point; but the latter resisted both treason and assault, and the Westchester hills, defended by her sons and their compatriots, were never successfully carried and held. On the 12th of October, 1776, the British landed on Throgg's Neck in this county, and by the 18th the whole English army was encamped near New Rochelle, with the intention of getting in Washington's rear and cutting him off, or driving him to a disastrous retreat. But the American General divined their purpose, and steadily and skillfully withdrew his forces, interposing ev-

ery obstacle to his adversary's advance, and frequently winning in skirmish and sudden assault, those advantages which distract an enemy and vastly inspirit a new army.

General Sullivan attacked the vanguard on the march, and astonished the veterans by the dash and the steadiness of his raw troops. Col. Rogers, a Tory leader, had won great fame as a partisan ranger in the old French and Indian wars; but with all his wariness and prestige, Col. Haslet, with a Delaware regiment, surprised and defeated his command, and killed or captured nearly every one of them near Nelson's Hill, in the town of Mamaroneck; while on another road, Hand and his Pennsylvania riflemen engaged and completely routed a body of the dreaded Hessians. In the meanwhile, Washington had determined to make a stand at White Plains, and for that purpose had thrown up intrenchments through the village and upon the hills about. On the 27th of October, while examining the works already finished and planning others, a light horseman, at full speed, dashed up and informed him that the enemy were in motion. Washington rode to head-quarters, was told that the guards had been beaten in, cried to his officers: "Gentlemen, you will repair to your respective commands, and do the best you can," and the battle began. It was a trying moment for the Patriot Chief; under him was an army of whom two-thirds were raw militia, undisciplined, ununiformed, badly armed; while marching to the assault, in splendid array, were thirteen thousand of the flower of the British and German forces, veterans of many battle-fields in many lands, and armed and equipped with every known appliance of war.

General Howe moved forward with one division of the British to attack our intrenchments in the village, while the other marched to assault the slight works erected by the Americans the night before on Chatterton's Hill. When opposite the village intrenchments, the horsemen in advance were suddenly sent back in disorder by the

well-directed fire of our cannon, and the officers, hastily holding a consultation in the fields, immediately changed their course to the left, towards Chatterton's Hill, where their first division was already engaged. Here Howe made his mistake; the intrenchments in the village were very weak, composed only of earth and sods, on heaps of corn-stalks, affording no protection against cannon balls, and an attack upon them might have led to the dispersion, if not the loss, of the American army. With twenty pieces of artillery they opened a furious cannonade upon the works on Chatterton's Hill to cover their crossing of the Bronx, while young Captain Alexander Hamilton, with a battery of two guns, answered from the table-rock on the top. Slowly General McDougall retires up the hill, contesting every inch of ground, and successfully opposing his poorly-equipped patriots to the superb discipline of the enemy; but on the one side are only discipline and brute courage; on the other are muskets which think, and men who have for years pledged and taught that "they were ready to sacrifice their estates, and every thing dear in life—yea, life itself—in the support of the common cause." Hamilton with his guns swept whole platoons off the face of the Hill, and drove them back twice in confusion in the river; but at length, outflanked, outnumbered five to one, the Americans, under cover of the support of General Putnam and his reserves, withdrew to the intrenchments in the village, carrying off their wounded and artillery, and leaving behind only their shattered fortifications. The British rested upon their arms all night, and fearing to pursue or continue the assault upon the new position Washington had taken in the North Castle Hills, retreated back to the Harlem River. This battle kept open the all important communications with the East, the source of most of our supplies, saved the highland passes, prevented the junction of the British in Canada and New York, and the dismemberment of the colonies. We pass by four eventful years, and on an Au-

gust day, in 1780, see Benedict Arnold and Washington at Peekskill. The latter has just commissioned the former to the command of West Point, the most important gift—the key to the fortunes of the Republic. It is one of the darkest summers of the whole revolutionary struggle; disasters and defeats had dispirited the nation. Lincoln surrendered at Charleston, with five thousand men and vast materials of war. Gates was beaten at Camden, with great loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and his whole army routed and dispersed. The South was prostrate, the East overrun, the credit of the Republic at its lowest ebb. The remnant of the Continental army partook of the general gloom and distress, and was held together mainly by the wisdom, prudence, influence, and thoughtful solicitude of Washington. The Committee of Congress reported: "The soldiers unpaid for months, the provisions irregular and insufficient, the medical department without supplies for the sick, and every department of service alike without money, and not even a shadow of credit left," while the Continental currency in which they were paid had so depreciated in value, that their families were suffering from inability to purchase with it the necessaries of life.

At this most propitious moment for the enemy, he determined, at one stroke, to end the war. If he could capture West Point, he would gain possession of much of the American munitions and armament: he could disperse Washington's army, open communications with Canada, and destroy the colonies in detail. He selected Benedict Arnold as the instrument who should destroy the liberties of his country, plied him with a bribe, and he fell. Arnold and Andre spent the night and day together at Smith's house, opposite Croton, concerting upon the price and the terms. Arnold was to receive a stipulated sum, and a position in the British army, and to so weaken and distribute the forces at West Point as to make it an easy prey to the enemy. Andre received from him all the pa

pers which explained the condition of the post and how its garrison should be so disposed as to fall helpless victims to captivity or death.

Upon the issue of that British Major's successful return to New York, with those documents depended results mightier than the men of that time knew. The Cortlandt Town farmers had driven the sloop-of-war "Vulture" down the bay, and cut off his retreat by water. He essayed it by land, he had escaped numberless perils, had passed the last American sentinel, and was gaily humming in anticipation of victory and promotion, when a fire-lock was suddenly presented at his breast, and Paulding cried, "halt!" All the power, wealth, and culture of Great Britain, in the person of her Adjutant-General, there confronted the liberties of America in the custody of three humble yeomen of Westchester; they were without fortune, of limited education, farmers' sons; to them were proffered riches beyond any sum with which they were familiar. Upon their action hung the happiness of millions, but they had within them that virtue and love of independence which gold could not buy nor power subdue. The money was spurned, treason was defeated, Andre died the death of a spy, and his captors became immortal. While time endures, and patriotism is held honorable, our county and our country will keep among their most cherished recollections the names of Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart.

Upon the muster-roll of the Continental Army during the war appear the names of two hundred and thirty-one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one men, and but one traitor. A review of revolutionary Westchester would be incomplete which did not set forth some of those incidents that escape the notice of the general historian, and are preserved by tradition and in local annals, but which best illustrate the time, its perils, its sacrifices, its sufferings, and its rewards. Could we have watched with Enoch Crosby, the Westchester spy, whose adventures suggested Cooper's immortal fiction, from his lofty crag in the high-

lands, bivouacked with Abraham Dyckman, or Cornelius Oakley, or John Odell, the daring guides, while they planned an attack upon a Tory camp, or sought to avenge some bloody outrage, how well could we appreciate our ancestors daily lives; how well understand that the hills and valleys of this old county are holy ground! Cortlandt saw her chief village of Peekskill twice pillaged and burned, and the surrounding country ravaged, time and again; but in many an engagement and skirmish the militia were successful. The memory of Cornelia Beekman's dignity and courage in defending her person and home, are a pleasant recollection of the townsfolk; while upon Gallows Hill, Palmer the spy expiated his crime, and old General Putnam penned his famous message to Sir Henry Clinton's demand for his release:

SIR: Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service, was taken as a spy, lurking within the American lines. He has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy, and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

P. S.—He has been executed accordingly.

At Pine's Bridge the gallant Colonel Green—the conqueror of Count Dunop—and his command were overwhelmed by De Lancy's troopers, and nearly every one of them put to the sword, while the enemy ravaged Yorktown, sweeping off property and carrying scores of residents to the prison-pens in New York; and the old Crumpond Church was reduced to ashes, because it was the meeting place of the Town Committee of Safety, and the British General said he would, "burn the damned rebel nest out, anyhow;" but he fired only the shell, for the spirit of the old chapel lived and grew in intensity and vigor. At the four corners over here in Mount Pleasant, when Col. Thompson was struggling desperately with a superior force of Hessians, and the winter air was warm with the flames of the neighboring dwellings, one of our horsemen,

pursued by two British Cavalrymen, stuck fast in the deep snow, threw up his arms and cried for quarter, "we'll quarter you," they shouted, raising their sabres, when the American firing, halved them, by killing one, and the other fled. Over the roads, all about, where we are now assembled, rode Tarleton and his dragoons, Emerick and his Hessians, De Lancy and his Tories, plundering farms and dwellings, capturing and carrying off well-known loyalists, and perpetrating every species of outrage; while upon their rear and flanks, hung avengers, the hardy yeomanry of the district, fighting from every rock and fence and tree.

While other portions of the country experienced the horrors of war, for a time, and then, by the campaign shifting to the other quarters, were relieved, there was no time when our county was free from the tramp of hostile armies or the incursions of predatory bands.

Bedford was twice burned, the last time because Tarleton said, who had been raiding over Poundridge, "of the inveteracy of the inhabitants in not accepting his offer to withhold the torch, if they would stop shooting from behind barns and stone walls." Would you understand more clearly the spirit of those times? The English Colonel Fowler had turned the family out of one of the stateliest mansions of the Town of Morrisania. He gave a dinner party, and as he and his guests were about to sit down, the house took fire; "Let it burn," he cried "but bring the dinner out on the green;" and while the flames crackled, and the helpless inmates of that dwelling bewailed this wanton destruction of their home, the wine-glasses clinked merrily, and the joke passed gaily around the table on the lawn; but that night the swift avengers routed his forces, and he died at the head of his command with a Westchester bullet through his brain. How Lieutenant Mosher whipped the enemy—three times outnumbering him—at Harrison; how Col. Armand destroyed the Hessians at Morrisania; how Col. Aaron Burr captured De Lancy's dreaded Refugee Corps under the very guns of

the British fort near Kings Bridge; how Col. Hull surrounded the most mischievous crew of Tories and Cow-Boys at Tarrytown, when they were full of the spoil of successful foray upon the people of the county, and in fancied security, were playing cards; and how, while his guards appeared on all sides, he, with grim humor, sprang into the midst, swinging a big stick, and shouting, "clubs are trumps, gentlemen; surrender or die." These and scores of other county events, incidents, and adventures, time fails me to narrate.

From the beginning to the close of the contest this village, though the scene of no great conflict, was subject to perpetual alarms, and frequently the theatre of bloody strife and furious retreat and pursuit. For years the advance guard of the American army patrolled the Croton, and daily parties of patriots dashed through these streets to attack or repel the Tory or Hessian companies which were harrassing the neighborhood, and often the villagers were terrorized by these Tory or Hessian companies or British dragoons, sweeping through the town for a midnight surprise to the American guards. Among the first to arm and drill to resist the encroachments of tyranny were the citizens of this village. As early as 1774 a regiment was formed here, and immediately after Concord and Lexington, in June, 1775, under the command of Colonel James, the director of the old silver mines, marched to Bunker Hill. In 1779 Captain Hopkins, a gallant and dashing cavalry officer, commanded a troop of light horse, stationed in this neighborhood. His company, largely recruited from here, were fighting for their homes and families. On the 30th of August, in that year, he attacked and routed Emmerick's corps of Tories and Hessians, killed twenty-three in his first charge, and sent them flying towards Tarrytown; there a strong force of the enemy stopped the flight, and Hopkins, largely outnumbered retreated; but when he came upon these hills he made a desperate stand, drove back the Hessians, and saved the

village. In October, of the same year, a British war vessel, the "Bellona," lay off in the bay. The quiet homes, scattered over these hill-sides, offered a tempting opportunity for plunder and destruction; but of the party who landed all were glad to escape with their lives; and the captain of the ship and other British officers remained prisoners in the hands of the vigilant Hopkins to exchange for the unfortunate Continental soldiers who were suffering and dying in the sugar houses and prisonships, in New York. The winter of 1782 was memorable in the recollection of the old residents of this town. The expiring embers of the long war flamed up with relentless fury. Each side was alert and vigorous in attack and defence. The guards of the Croton, sometimes the pursuers sometimes pursued by their enemies, were daily scouring these fields, and skirmish and battle were of constant occurrence. Sing Sing was a lively residence for a peaceful citizen in those days. His most important occupation each morning was to return devout thanks that only his property was plundered, and neither his house burned or his family murdered the night before. About midnight a tramp of horsemen was heard upon the snow, and like a flash rode by a regiment of Tory cavalry. Their prey was a body of Americans under Captain Williams, stationed at the Old Orser Farm on the Croton Road. Williams was completely surprised, his command cut to pieces, some of them chased down the bank out on to the frozen river, and there killed, while Williams himself escaped only by his superior skill as a swordsman and horseman. Cutting his way through the surrounding enemy, and followed by a British dragoon, he reined suddenly to one side; the pursueing trooper, unable to stop, dashed by, and as he passed, Williams cleaved him down with a back-handed blow, and carried his horse and trappings in triumph to head-quarters. From Teller's Point, in 1780, served by our Townsmen, thundered a single piece of ordnance upon the "Vulture." Anxiously, from Smith's house, Andre watched

this cannonade; and when the British sloop of war weighed anchor and dropped down the river, his heart sank within him. His only escape was that journey by land which ended in his capture and the salvation of the Republic. That old gun known as "Old White," has for nearly a century, on each recurring anniversary, aroused the echoes and the memories of that eventful day. May it remain forever in your possession as a cherished memento, and no other necessity arise for its use, than to recall recollections of the glorious past.

Westchester was not only conspicuous in the beginning, but was also the theatre of the events which marked the close of the war. When Bunker Hill, White Plains, Saratoga, and Monmouth, had been followed by the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and the recognition of American Independence, Washington and the English generals met at Dobb's Ferry in this county, and completed the final arrangements for the evacuation of New York, and the departure of the last vestige of the British power from the land. In December, seventeen hundred and eighty-three, the curtain fell upon the closing act in the drama of the seven years' war. As the English troops embarked from the Battery, Washington marched down Broadway, his escort the Westchester light-horse, his surroundings a free, happy, enthusiastic people, hailing him with grateful cheers as the Father of his Country. I have thus endeavored briefly and hurriedly to present Westchester's story during the revolutionary period. Through its dark and bloody record run the lessons of fidelity to principle, devotion to country, love of liberty and lofty public virtue, which this day is set apart for us to reverently study and faithfully follow. Our county to-day, within its original limits, has nearly as much population and more wealth than did the whole State in 1776. Compare Westchester then with now; see its thriving villages, its richly-cultivated farms, its splendid residences, its manifold industries, its schools and academies, and we have the best illus-

tration of what we have gained by our fathers steadfastness and courage. How our county responded to the call for the preservation of the National life is within the recent recollections of us all. Nearly every battle-field attested the valor and patriotism of her sons—the stalwart veteran dignifying the citizenship for which he fought, by the industrious pursuit of the avocations of peace; the wounded soldier whose empty sleeve or burthened crutch eloquently voices his story, are the living witnesses; while the silent ones, are the little hillocks far away, the flag-crowned graves in the country church yards, the vacant seats by the family hearth-stones.

The government which the colonial statesmen founded, and for which the Continental soldier fought, has stood the wear and strain of a century. It has repelled foreign foes, it has proved sufficiently compact and elastic to resist the shock of and successfully subdue the mightiest civil convulsion of modern times; it has eliminated slavery from its polity, and assimilated the freedmen by its laws; it has extended its boundaries far and wide, and created and adopted new states, great empires in themselves; it has received with open hospitality the emigrant from every land, and conferred upon him the equal rights of citizenship; its people have enjoyed unparalleled prosperity and progress in material wealth, and it has withstood the corruptions which inevitably follow in the train of great riches, to sap and mine all free institutions. Summing up all these results, and enjoying the full measure of all these blessings, while the Republic lives let us fullfil the prophecy of old John Adams, and welcome every recurrence of this day, "with thanksgiving, with festivity, with bonfires, and illuminations, and with every manifestation of exultation, gratitude, and joy."

In the generous spirit of our time, and the broad catholicity of this hour, we cultivate no resentments and harbor no revenges. We remember Great Britain, not as the land of George the Third and Lord North, but as the country

of Chatham and Burke. With the same language and lineage, we no longer settle our difficulties by the bloody issues of war, but by peaceful arbitration, and are rivals only in the race for a better civilization and its beneficent results. No scaffold stands amid the ashes of the rebellion, no dungeon door closes upon a political offender; but holding out our arms to our southern brethren, we say, "you fought for a system and an idea and failed;" by our common memories, ancestry and interests, unite with us in strengthening, enlarging and perpetuating the Republic. We look abroad and behold restrictions upon suffrage and disabilities upon religions disappear from Great Britain; France drifting into Republicanism, as the only stable government; the German and Italian people seeking for nationality; and we hopefully await the time when the leaven of liberty from America shall have regenerated the political conditions of every race. The contemplation of the subjects suggested by this day brings before the mind, in all their grand proportions, the actors in the struggle for Independence, with their patriotism, statesmanship and public virtue. The man who led the armies, the men who sat in the Continental Congress, the men who framed the Constitution, have left behind them a heritage of courage, ideas and principles, which will preserve our institutions so long as they are animate and inspire the conduct and character of the nation. But over and above them all of that age, and of every age, like the Alps overwhelm you with their grandeur as you approach, and whose summits are lost in the clouds as you recede, towers the central figure of the century—George Washington. Our flag floats over us to-day with no star dimmed, emblematic of more than ever before; shoulder to shoulder, heart-beat to heart-beat, in the full blaze of the rising sun of the second century, and in its clear light, see before us our duties and responsibilities; with one voice let us repeat that noble liturgy of liberty uttered by our martyr

President, Abraham Lincoln, "that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish forever from the earth."

# Historical Sketch.

## By Rev. ALEXANDER WATSON.

The proper history of Sing Sing lies all within the limits of the now past century—the period of our independent national existence.

Whatever precedes this, mingles with the general history of the region, and until within a little more than twenty years its subsequent record is blended with the town of Mount Pleasant, of which it formed a part.

To get at our central subject, therefore, a preliminary glance at its earlier relations is necessary.

In or about the year 1680, a patent was granted by the British crown to Vredryck Flypsen, or, as afterward written, Frederick Philipse, permitting him "to freely buy" the district of country extending from Spuyten Duyvel creek, northward to the Croton river. This he proceeded to do, and at various times from 1680 to 1684 or 6, in several lots, and at intervals, he purchased the whole region from the Indians, and these purchases, with others made on the west side of the Hudson about Tappan, &c., were confirmed to him by the Royal Charter of William and Mary, King and Queen of Great Britain, witnessed by Governor Benjamin Fletcher, at Fort William Henry, on the 12th day of June, 1693.

The last of these purchases of Indian lands (August 24, 1685) was of the "tract or parcel of land commonly called by the Indians Sinck Sinck, of which the boundary began at the Hudson river by the northernmost part of the land, already owned by the said Frederick Philipse," which would probably be not far from the Havenche, for

he was empowered, in buying the Pocantico valley, to buy land to the extent of 400 rods on each side of the stream. From this point it ran along the Hudson northward to the Croton (or "Kichtawan"), "along the said creek or river two English miles, and from thence up the country upon a due east line" until it came to the Niphorha (Nepera), or what we call saw mill river, which, however, a due east line from the point indicated would never strike, but run considerably to the north of its head waters.

Mr. Philipse was the grandson of a Bohemian of some distinction, whose family was driven from his native home on account of the favor he had shown to John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

For a time they resided in East Friesland, and here, in 1656, Frederick Philipse, the first "lord of the manor of Philipsburg" was born. In 1658 we find his father, Frederick Philipse, emigrating from Bolswaert in Holland to New Amsterdam (New York), where he became a successful merchant. His son and successor, Frederick of the Manor, made large purchases of land in and about New Amsterdam, besides the various lots that united to form the Manor of Philipsburg.

The northern line of the Philips Manor, at the Croton, touched and ran eastward conterminously with the southern boundary of the Manor of Van Cortlandt.

After a few years, the two manorial families were united by the marriage of Frederick Philipse to Catharine Van Cortlandt. But the families thus happily united in one generation were divided in the next but one. When "the times that tried men's souls" came on, the Van Cortlandt's, to their honor, and in spite of allurements to a contrary course, adhered to the cause of freedom and their country, while the family of Philipse, or Flypsen, went with the British.

At the triumphant close of our Revolutionary struggle, the whole confiscated manor of Philipsburg was sold

under commissioners of forfeiture, appointed for this purpose by the State. Of the Manor land thus sold, the town of Mount Pleasant formed the north western portion. Its boundaries extending from the Andre brook on the south along the Hudson to the Croton on the north, and eastward to the line of the town of Newcastle, the latter bounding it on its easterly, and Greenburg on its southerly border.

Up to, and through the revolutionary period, the township territory, as thus indicated, was but sparsely settled, its occupants — tenants of the manor—being mostly descendants of the first settlers; the mingled Dutch and French, and Swiss, and a very scant admixture of Irish, Scotch and English, whom religious persecution had driven from their European homes, with, perhaps, some additions by later immigration. They were the Ackers, Ausers, Beekmans, Bishops, Buckhouts, Cannifs, Collyers, Leggetts, Washburns, Foshays, Davids or Davis's, Garrisons, Delavans, Hunts, Hitchcocks, Hortons, McCords, Millers, Merritts, Orsors, Palmers, Pugsleys, Sees, Ryders, Raymonds, Sherwoods, Smiths, Tompkins, Storms's, Wards, Williams, Wheelers, Van Warts, Van Tassells.

Of many of these names some were found on each side in the war of Independence, for that crucial contest, like our most recent struggle, divided families and alienated near friends, and both afforded numerous illustrations of the truth, that in a great crisis, the most dangerous members of community are good men wrong.

But the blood of revolutionary whigs and tories, noble patriots and conscientious traitors, combine in the veins of their grandchildren and great grandchildren around us, and in its mingled flow obliterates the memories of hate; save in a few aggravated cases, where family traditions are still preserved of outrages, the endurance of which has curdled the blood of generations, and whose

bare recital, even at this distance of time, stirs the soul to its deepest depths.

These, however, with all our more recent wounds we may confidently hope that time, the great healer, will perfectly cure, leaving neither scar nor callosity upon any heart, north or south, east or west.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War and the manor sales of which we have spoken, certain English families settled upon the river, just south of our present village, and to these additions were at various times made from the same source, the families gradually extending their selection of localities northward to a little beyond the present boundaries of our village incorporation. The pioneers of these were the father of the late Judge Edward Kemeys, and the brothers Thomas and John Agate, with Hilyer, Priestly and others. By these a small settlement was formed, which they called Sparta. Why they so named it we are left to conjecture. Some have said, "because a band of Spartans came there and worked in the brick yard." But this inverts the natural order of things in such matters, and it was doubtless the proprietors that named the place; and in explanation of their choice of the brief and excellent designation, it has been surmised that among them some one, at least, was found, familiar with the general character of Grecian Sparta, which is so extremely rocky that in the days of the modern Greek struggle for independence, when the American missionary, Dr. King, was riding with Prince Mavrocordata through the region of ancient Sparta, now called "Mani," the Prince, with some pardonable exaggeration said to the doctor, "All the stones that God made he strewed in Mani." There were, however, as we know, enough left to pave our Sparta, and justify its naming after its rocky predecessor, whether this theory of the fact be true or mistaken.

For quite a number of years Sparta was the chief business point of the whole township. Market sloops

ran from its natural rock piers, carrying the produce of the country to New York. The only country stores of consequence were there, and probably there are persons here to-day who in childhood have trotted along side of their mothers from Sing Sing to Sparta to do the family trading.

Much curiosity has been felt in respect to the origin and meaning of the name of our village, and various conjectures, more or less plausible, have been formed respecting it.

Forty years ago, and later, there were many who settled coolly down upon the conclusion that it had derived its name from the venerable William Sing, one of the earliest English settlers in our immediate village; a quiet, earnest Christian man, who never thought of being thus immortalized.

Barber, in his Historical collections, tells a story of its being given by two castaway Chinese sailors, who had somehow found their way here, and named it thus after their own Asiatic home. But this legendary theory seems scarcely worthy of investigation; and, dismissing it, we turn to the records of the colonial days for reliable information. In these, both public and private, we find mention made of certain Indians inhabiting the country between the two rivulets, "Armonk" and "Sinck Sinck." That a part of these Indians—perhaps a small clan of them, probably of the Mohegan tribe—had their homes just here, and it is most likely that the "Kill brook" of our day is the "Sinck Sinck" of the Indian. But whether or not this was Sinck the Sinck stream, the Indian settlement of the clan was here; for, as before noted, this their territory was the last purchase made by Frederick Philipse to complete his manorial grant. So also in leaving this very property to his grandson, the Frederick Philipse who forfeited the manor in 1776—he first spells it as two words "Cinque Singte," and then as one word, with the same letters but with-

out the second capital. It would therefore seem clear that the stream, and the clan, and their settlement, were called by a name of the sound of which these words are the expression, and we have simply continued it from its Indian authors.

The meaning of the term and its derivation, were examined in 1844, by Henry M. Schoolcraft, at the special instance of Gen. Aaron Ward, at that time Representative in Congress from this District. Mr. Schoolcraft, with an etymologist's freedom, concluded that Sing Sing was derived from, or was a modification of Ossinee Ossinee, meaning Stone upon Stone. We have not Mr. Schoolcraft's Indian pronunciation of the word Ossinee before us, if, as we suppose, he gave it. But since the evidence seems clear that the terms we now use express almost precisely the Indian sound of their own name, and the name of the brook and locality, it is a little difficult to understand how Mr. Schoolcraft reached his conclusion. Still it was so far accepted, that in May, 1845, when our present town was taken from Mt. Pleasant, it was constituted under the name of "Ossinsing." But in March of the next year, this was changed, by dropping out the third "s," making it read "Ossining," which pleasant name the town still retains, while our village bears its much older name of "Sing Sing." And as there is no other place on the Hudson—where the piling of stone upon stone is frequently found—nor in the Union, nor, so far as we are informed, short of the home of the two mythical Chinese of whom Barber tells, bearing the same name, a further doubt, we think, is thrown upon the correctness of Mr Schoolcraft's derivation.

The chief purchasers in 1784–5 of the land which our village and town includes, were Garrison, Ward, Hunt, Hunter, Auser, Orsor, Crouk, with the Ackers, Millers, Storms, Balyes, Bishops, McCords, Ryders and others.

At the time of the manor sales, Sing Sing had a name and little more; but in entering on the race with Sprata,

when it began to be a village, its special advantages were found in its having a better grist mill stream and in consequence, probably, it soon had also the better blacksmith's shop. At any rate, at quite an early day some Eastern families came in, and as years passed the stores at the "upper dock," kept by Mark Yale and others did most of the business of the village, having the advantage of being near to the fishing ground of Crawbuckie beach, etc., and of the working of a brick-yard in the immediate vicinity, by the Messrs. Wood, afterwards of Tarrytown.

But most of the families south of the Kill, or Sinck Sinck Brook, either traded at Sparta or with Robert K. Foster, who had located "on the hill," upon the north side of Main street, not far from the site of the old stone "mansion," (probably of one story) in which Bolton says Moses Ward had resided, and which was "used for defence against the Indians." This domestic home-made fort must have stood pretty nearly on the spot now occupied by the Croton Aqueduct where it strikes Main street; and a little to the west or southwest, between this and "Uncle Sammy Mott's" tanyard and residence, the latter of which stood upon the spot now covered by the point of Barlow Block, Mr. Foster opened a shoe and general country store. His father or uncle had "blazed the way" through the forest from Connecticut to this point, and quite early in the history of our village he became postmaster, holding the position for many years. The name and style of our post office was then "Mount Pleasant," which name it retained until a late day, although as early as 1813 Sing Sing became an incorporated village.

This is accounted for by the fact that Sparta and Sing Sing were the only business points lying upon the river within the limits of the town of Mount Pleasant. All the trade of its southern portion went to "Tarrytown point," which is in the town of Greenburg, except so

much of it as might be attracted by the stores of Peter See and Nathaniel Bayliss, which were on this side of the Greenburg line, upon the Bedford road, just in the eastern edge of "Beekmantown," which at that time, with the exception of these stores and one or two dwellings lay almost "in commons," as did also most of the woodland belonging to the Beekman estate (of some 1600 acres), lying between this point and the aqueduct arch, where it crosses "the Albany Post Road," at the foot of "the Leggett hill."

The village of Sing Sing continued to attract population and business, especially after the construction of the Highland Turnpike or Albany Post Road, and the Croton Turnpike, with a stage line, run by Hachaliah Bailey, of Somers, from New York to Danbury in the winter, and in summer connecting with the steamboat John Jay at our lower landing, and thus forming a still better connection with the city.

About this time, say 1828–30, the census of the village proper, roughly taken, showed a population of about 1100, with three physicians of reputation, Dr. J. D. Fowler, Dr. Wm. N. Belcher and Dr. A. K. Hoffman, the father of the ex-governor, while east of us was Dr. Bowron and northeast Dr. Fountain, both commanding wide confidence in their profession. We had also two lawyers of standing, General Aaron Ward, son of Moses Ward named above, who derived his military title from his engagement in the war of 1812, and his command in the State Militia, and Richard R. Voris, Esq., the father of our neighbor Dr. Voris and of the estimable and highly respected lady of Marlborough Churchill, Esq.; we had also at least three honest hotels, not established as speculations upon debased appetite, but for veritable public accommodation, as stage houses and for travelers. But one newspaper was then published in the place, the "Westchester Herald," first issued by Mr. Addington; bought of him by Stephen Marshall, and by him sold to

Caleb Roscoe, who published it for many years, and until after the establishment of other journals among us. With so limited a population, of course our streets were few. The Highland Turnpike, or "Albany Post Road," simply passed us on its way to the north. The Croton Turnpike proper, or "Danbury Stage Road," ended just where now the Bank stands, but which was then the site of the residence of Esquire Charles Yoe, a plain and upright man, long the only Justice of the Peace we had. Here it struck the Highland Turnpike, and the Danbury stages, turning southward, went on to the Crosby stage house, kept by Enoch Crosby, Jr., the worthy son of the Westchester spy—a man to whom even "the friends of temperance" might have been willing to vote a license for a thousand years—proceeding thence through Church street to Main and to the landing, or they reached the same point by keeping carefully around the old "Ward House," which stood out in Pleasant square, about as far as where the pump and water-trough now stand, passing the rear of the Baptist church, and so going directly down Main street and the Dock hill. The steamboat dock extended pretty well out, while yet the market sloops ran up quite in to the range of what is now Secor & Washburn's lumber yard, to unload into the storehouse their return freight from New York. Then, as now, the same small dwellings built into the bank, skirted the further side of Main street at its lower end, where it deflects to the south-westward along what was once a small bay or inlet. Water street ran, as it still runs, between the upper and lower landings, and upon it lived Captain Henry Harris, and some others, with the parents of the well-known builders of the "Drew," the "Thomas Collyer" and other steamboats.

The "upper dock hill" had then only a double outlet to the Albany Post Road; one direct to the Westchester Bridge, the other across the bridge at the grist mill (now file works), just where the noble arch of the aqueduct

spans the kill, and out by the present American Hotel. Spring street, so named from the strong spring that boiled up on its eastern side just south of Main street, was opened only to Liberty street or a little beyond. State street was closed by a gate and fence across it, near the house so long occupied by the venerable and vigorous Edmund Blunt, and in which he died. Hunter street ran along somehow through the State Prison farm, and crept into Sparta; and Broad avenue was only a pleasant entrance to the Delavan school for young ladies. *Voila tout!* as the French say, *these were all*, and these in poor keeping and condition. If then we take a map of our village and blot out all but these, with almost every dwelling of comfort and beauty and luxury, upon which our eyes now look with pride and pleasure, we shall obtain a vivid conception of the change that has come over us within a little less than fifty years. There are not a dozen comfortably inhabitable dwellings in our village limits which this period has not seen either newly built or thoroughly renovated; and our population of 1,100 has swelled to 7,203.

The location of the Mt. Pleasant State Prison in our neighborhood in 1826–28 gave a very sensible impulse to business at this point. The building of this institution by the convicts was an undertaking full of risk and peril to any but aman of the very highest decision of character, and such an one was found in Captain Elam Lynds, who directed it to a successful accomplishment.

"A man," said Messieurs De Tocqueville and Beaumont, in their official report to the French Government "a man of more energy of will than any other we have ever met." A most fitting tribute to a stern but just officer, who would do no offender wrong, but insisted on making a distinction between a man and a horsethief, and this not—as seems sometimes to be done—to the disadvantage

of the former. With the Widow Green and all just thinkers, he held that

> "'Tis not all love and sickish sweet
> Makes this world nor the 'tother complete."

Would that the State and nation had a thousand such to-day, to shame, and if needful scourge the age to honesty and truth.

From this time onward the means of communication with New York by steamboat steadily improved up to the opening of the Hudson River Railroad to this point in 1849. This perfecting its means of rapid intercourse with the great trade centre, the establishment of its own bank, and other important movements of capital have doubtless secured for it a permanent career of growth and prosperity, in spite of any temporary checks or reverses that it may meet.

The fires which of late years have swept away almost its whole business portions have simply given occasion for the construction of more and better buildings, until its stores of various kinds vie with those of New York in their attractiveness, and in the abundant variety of their articles of merchandise.

It is a little remarkable that revolutionary history affords only incidental mention of Sing Sing, and records no event of importance connecting with our village. Even Andre missed us by coming out on the "old Albany Post Road near Sparta."

The floating traditions of Washington's dinings and resting, and the more exciting stories of "Rifle Jake's" shots and escapes; the saucy exploits of Crosby, the Westchester spy, in making sport for his men by luring unwary Britishers from their vessel to the shore and capturing them, with the re-echoing sound of "Old Whitey's" cannonading of the Vulture off Senasqua neck (Teller's Point), might form a pleasant reading book for boys, but hardly rise to the character of historic events. Our task is a severe one; not to make or to distort history, not even

to embellish it, but to sketch it truthfully; and we confess to a feeling of regret that the above statement is true and therefore our sketch must be tame.

There is, however, an affair which occurred here, that has subtle and intimate relation to that controlling event of the war, the capture of Andre; its connection with which, so far as is known, having hitherto passed without recognition.

The affair referred to is thus narrated in Bolton's History of Westchester, Vol. I, pp. 502–3:

"During the winter of 1782, Capt. Daniel Williams undertook, with a small party of dragoons, a foraging expedition into the neighborhood of Morrisania. Success had attended the enterprise, and they were thus far on their way homeward, when they halted to refresh themselves. Not apprehending pursuit, they neglected to post guards, and the road being hidden by a small knoll, which rose directly in front of the windows, they were not aware of an enemy's approach until nearly surrounded by Capt. Bearmore and his dragoons. (This was at the old Auser homestead, familiarly known forty years ago as "the Bob Auser place," now the property and residence of Benjamin Moore, Esq.) The confusion that ensued may be imagined. Some of the Americans were cut down within and about the house; (the old farm house in which the writer, in his youth, has more than once enjoyed the hospitality of its owner) others rushed along the steep bank to the river, which was frozen, their enemies following in hot pursuit. Several were slain uponthe ice; among the latter was George McChain."

Let us fill out this narrative, and see how it links with the most important event of the war, the capture of Andre. We do this from unquestionable family tradition. At the time of this expedition, the Captain of the Westchester Light Horse, or Dragoons, was confined to his bed by sickness, and at his bidding his younger brother, then

a stripling, rode his horse as one of the party, under Captain Williams.

The expedition, as above stated, was successful; but on their way back they halted at a farm house, occupied by an old and well known neighbor of some of them, but who, being of Tory proclivities, had temporarily exchanged residence with the patriotic owner of the lower homestead; for on the neutral ground, which included and was covered by the Philipse manor, a patriot could not live, and north of it a tory had a sorry life, if he did live. Here the party halted, and thrown off their guard by their acquaintance with the occupant, they probably talked freely of their further course and movements, without thinking of betrayal. On arriving at the old Auser homestead, they tied their horses in the barn and went to supper; in the midst of which Bearmore's men surprised them. A few moments sufficed to cut their horses loose and mount who could. But McChain fled afoot, was overtaken upon the ice and shot. Ahead of him were John Paulding and the young stripling volunteer. They were taken prisoners and confined in the New York sugar house.

Three days before the capture of Andre, Paulding escaped in the dress of a German yager, and Gen. Van Cortlandt states (as you will find by referring to Lossing, or Bolton, Vol. 1, p. 224, Note,) that he wore this dress on the day of the capture, which tended to deceive Andre, and led him to exclaim in answer to their reply, "Thank God, I am among friends." To which we may add the other seemingly unaccountable and far more important avowal of his British military position, for Paulding testifies that "on seeing Gen. Arnold's pass, he should have let him go, if he had not previously said he was a British officer." Thus, in Providence, we may say the surprise at Auser's gave Paulding the yager's coat which captured Andre.

We return to our own more immediate history.

At the time of the sales by the Commissioners of Forfeiture, 1785, Bolton, probably on the authority of Gen. Ward, says, "There were but three dwelling houses in Sing Sing," and we are pretty safe in concluding that as late as at the opening of this century, their number had not more than doubled. In truth it simply had its name as a camping ground of the Indians, with the stone dwelling, which had been used for defence against them. It was without either school house or place of worship. But within the present boundaries of our town, though beyond the village line, there stood then, and had stood for years, a small hip-roofed church, in or adjoining the old Sparta burying ground, and in this church the Gospel had been long preached to a people whom the close of the war found, in the most emphatic sense of the terms, scattered and peeled.

This church organization, formed, it is said, in 1768, was transferred to Sing Sing about the year 1800. At the same time the building was removed to the west side of the old Albany post road, very near to the present site of the house at the corner of the road leading to Scarborough depot. It was converted into a dwelling, and in after days was occupied by Capt. Thomas Cotterel, (or Catterall), who taught the school at the foot of the "Long Hill," for so many years that the district was commonly called by his name. From the time of this church removal until now, the whole region, including the village of Sparta, has been regarded as missionary ground, and religious labor and service for its inhabitants has been for years past systematically pursued, with a pleasant measure of success, and an enlarging promise of still greater good.

In the year 1800 the Presbyterian Church in Sing Sing was built upon a lot deeded, with this object, by Moses Ward, for a nominal consideration, to that society. In

1834 the frame structure was taken down and the church rebuilt with brick. In 1869 this building and the lot were sold, and the present Presbyterian Church erected in 1869–70.

The Baptist Church of our village was organized in 1790. In 1815 its first house of worship, which also served the purpose of a school house, was erected, upon land given to the Society by Elijah Hunter, who gave it also separate lots of land for a parsonage and other uses. In 1834 this first church building was thoroughly renovated or rebuilt, chiefly under the active agency and superintendence of Capt. Caleb Willis, who, when the rubbish was cleared away, locked the door, put the key in his pocket and started for his home, a few rods down the street, but died before reaching it.

This building continued until 1873, when the present structure was built.

From quite an early date in our village and town history, the Methodists have held services among us, but their first church building, on Spring street, was erected in 1830–31, a frame structure, which was removed in 1851 and replaced by an enlarged brick church.

A second Methodist church was organized in North Sing Sing in 1869–70, and a pleasant building erected for its use.

In 1834–36, St. Paul's Episcopal church was built of stone on Liberty street, being dedicated July 6, 1836, say forty years ago.

In 1855, a small stone Episcopal church (designated "All Saints") was built at Briar Cliff, some two miles south east from Sing Sing, by the Rev. Dr. Ogilby, of New York.

In 1851, a somewhat similar small stone church (St. Mary's) was erected on the post road, about two miles south of our village, and very near our present town

line, by Rev. Drs. Creighton and Mead, of the Episcopal church.

And in 1869, a portion of the members of St. Paul's church, in Sing Sing, formed a second Episcopal society, known as Trinity church, and purchased the brick Presbyterian church for their place of worship.

The Roman Catholics at the first temporarily occupied a small hired brick building upon the property of Rev. Mr. Alburtis, of the Reformed Dutch Church, afterwards the property of Thomas Smull. They then for a time held their service in the Franklin Academy. But in 1856 their brick church upon the Albany Post Road, in North Sing Sing was completed, consecrated and occupied.

Sabbath Schools were introduced among us at quite an early date, but as late as 1828–30 were in a comparatively weak and unsatisfactory condition, while the efforts which were sometimes made to establish outlying schools, commonly failed through want of wisdom and tact in their promoters. In the latter year, on the request of Messrs. Leonard Bleecker and Rev. Spencer H. Cone, the Baptist Sunday School received a donation of fifty New Testaments from the New York Bible Society, and in the same year a new impulse was given to the Presbyterian Sunday School by the influence of Rev. Dr. N. S. Prime, and the active interest taken in it by his family and teachers.

Up to this time the Sabbath Schools had been held in the churches, and it was the custom to disband them for the winter. Our first winter Sabbath School was held about this time in the Presbyterian Church, or its newly built Sabbath School-room, under the superintendence of the present writer. All the churches enumerated above have now their Sabbath Schools, with suitable school appointments, and they are held without interruption throughout the year.

While the religious peculiarities and necessities of our

advancing population have thus been amply provided for, the interests of general and thorough education have received equal attention.

The Mount Pleasant Academy was first founded by the inhabitants of our village in 1814, was incorporated in 1820, and passed under the control of the Regents of the University. It was at first located on Liberty street, in a large frame building on the site of the present parsonage of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, but in 1830–31, the trustees determined on its removal and enlargement, and the present stone academy, costing some $18,000, was erected, and the Rev. Dr. N. S. Prime, who had been for some time principal of the academy, occupied the new building with great success until his subsequent removal to Newburg. The old building which he had vacated was again for a number of years occupied for the purposes of education, bearing the title of the Franklin Academy.

The school now known as St. John's, under the Rev. Dr. Gibson, was organized as a Military Boarding School by Marlborough Churchill, Esq., a graduate of West Point, and taught by him some twenty-four years.

On the south end of the height known as Simon Hill stands the Military Academy of Rev. Mr. Holbrook, and in the more northerly part of the village near the upper landing, in what used to be known as the residence of Colonel Snowden, the Military School of Captain Symonds is located. The military school system is also successfully adopted by Messrs. Benjamin & Allen, in their management of the Mount Pleasant Academy.

District schools are still kept in our town; but in the village our large, commodious and well-appointed public school has worthily displaced them, and raised the grade of our common school education.

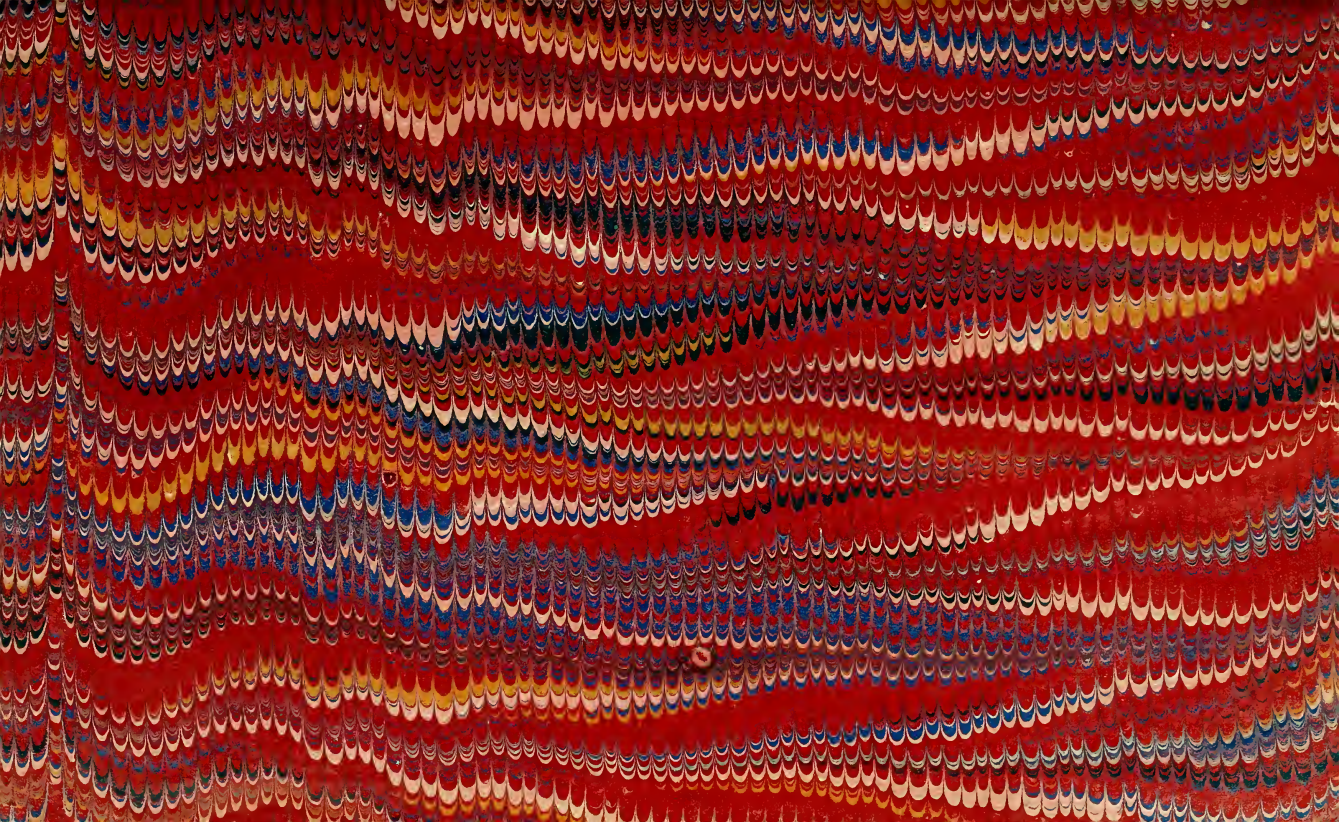
Of its girls' schools, from the primary for little ones, up to the Classical Institute for young ladies, Sing Sing may be justly proud. Of the higher class of these, begin-

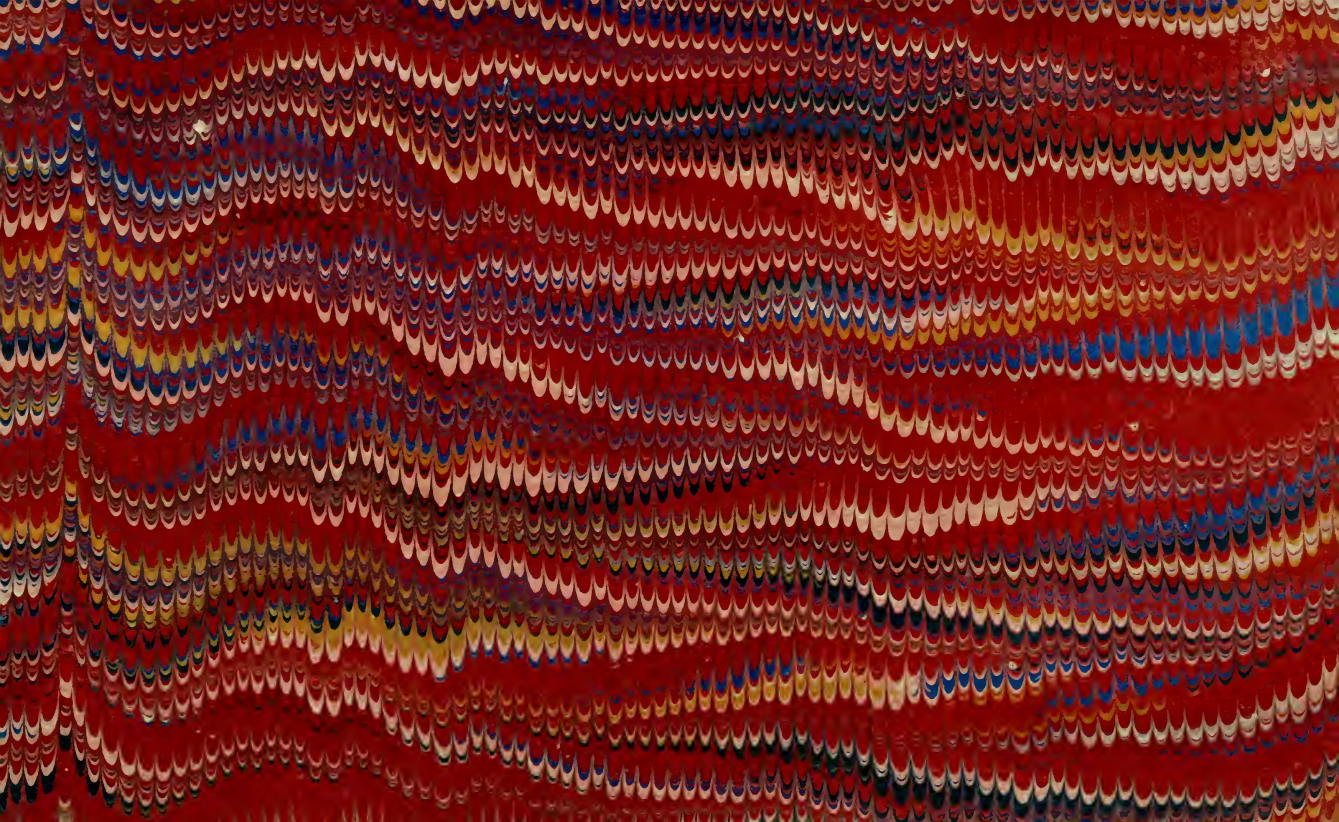
ning with that taught first by Miss Delavan, daughter of Gen. Delavan, of the Revolution, and afterward, in 1830–1, by Miss Maria Prime, and running on for more than forty years to the present — which compares advantageously with all the past—we have a series of schools fairly and fully sustaining the character that ought to attach to such institutions.

These various educational institutions are all successful, and mark and givecharacter to our village. It is the beauty of its scenery and the salubrity of its air that make such success possible in the hands of their able conductors.

The general and just appreciation of its surpassing scenery was concentrated in the words of Mr. De Tocqueville, before named, when standing on the eastern heights of Sing Sing, and looking northward and southward and westward, he said to his companion, "I must except the view of the Bay of Naples, out of deference to the opinion of the civilized world, but with that exception, the world has not such scenery." And the prevailing and almost perpetual healthfulness of our village and the region about it, is strikingly shown by the fact that no serious sickness has ever interfered with the operations of any of our schools, and that death among our pupils has been almost unknown.

These various religious and educational privileges and institutions are an honor to our community, have a claim upon the regard of all, and are worthy of our individual personal interest in their increase, their continued usefulness and their enlarging prosperity.





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